

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7476

INFO USDOEHQ WASHDC PRIORITY

USDOEHQ GERMANTOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VIENNA 07066

USIAEA

DEPT PASS IO/SCT AND OES/NET, ,LSO NRC
DOE PASS AMMONS, IA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: JA, TECH, ENRG

SUBJECT: JAPANESE REQUEST FOR HELP IN SHIPMENT OF HEU

1. H. KURIHARA AND MR. HIRATA, IN VIENNA FROM TOKYO
FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON JAPANESE NPT FACILITY ATTACHMENTS,
REQUESTED MEETING WITH MISSION OFFICERS ON AUGUST 3.
THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY MR. KATO OF JAPANESE MISSION
TO IAEA IN VIENNA.

2. SUBJECT WAS FUEL FOR JAPANESE MATERIALS TESTING
REACTOR (JMTR) AT THE JAPANESE ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH
INSTITUTE. ACCORDING TO HIRATA, JMTR OPERATES ON
APPROXIMATELY 90 PERCENT ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL AND HAS
BEEN IN OPERATION FOR OVER 10 YEARS. A SHIPMENT OF
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SPENT FUEL FROM JMTR HAS BEEN REPROCESSED IN FRANCE
AND 81 KG'S OF THE RECOVERED HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM
WAS RETURNED BY FRANCE TO THE UNITED STATES IN
DECEMBER OF 1976.

3. IN THE UNITED STATES, THE 81 KG'S WERE "RE-ENRICHED"
BACK UP TO 90 PERCENT, AND IN 1977, AT THE REQUEST OF

JAPAN, THE U.S. SENT 46 KG'S OF THIS HEU (IN FORM OF URANIUM HEXAFLUORIDE) TO NUKEM IN HANAU, WEST GERMANY FOR CONVERSION INTO URANIUM METAL. (35 KG'S STILL REMAIN IN U.S.) IN FEBRUARY 1978 USG AUTHORIZED TRANSFER OF THAT 46 KG'S OF HEU METAL FROM FRG TO JAPAN. JAPAN HOPED TO RECEIVE THE METAL EARLY SEPTEMBER 1978 SO THAT FUEL ELEMENTS FOR JMTR COULD BE FABRICATED BEFORE NOVEMBER 1978 WHEN THE PRESENT FUEL SUPPLIES WILL BE EXHAUSTED. MR. HIRATA SAID THAT THE JMTR IS A VERY BUSY REACTOR AND THAT LACK OF FUEL, CAUSING IT TO SHUT DOWN, WOULD BE VERY HARMFUL TO MANY PROGRAMS AND ALSO QUITE EMBARRASSING.

4. THE QUESTION FACED BY GOJ IS HOW TO TRANSFER THE 46 KG'S OF 90 PERCENT ENRICHED URANIUM METAL FROM THE FRG TO JAPAN SAFELY AND IN FULL RECOGNITION OF THE NEEDS AND CONSTRAINTS OF ADEQUATE PHYSICAL PROTECTION. PHYSICAL PROTECTION REGULATIONS DICTATED THAT THE SHIPMENT SHOULD GO BY AIR, THAT IT SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ARMED GUARD, AND THAT IT SHOULD GO NON-STOP FROM FRANKFURT TO JAPAN WITHOUT OVERFLYING SOVIET TERRITORY.

5. SINCE APPARENTLY ONLY LUFTHANSA AND JAPAN AIRLINES HAVE REGULARLY SCHEDULED CARGO FLIGHTS FROM FRANKFURT TO JAPAN (VIA ANCHORAGE, ALASKA,) THIS SEEMED TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LOGICAL SOLUTION (THE U.S. APPARENTLY HAS INDICATED TO JAPAN THAT THE SCHEDULED REFUELING STOP OF THOSE FLIGHTS IN ANCHORAGE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE FROM THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW). HOWEVER, LUFTHANSA WOULD NOT PERMIT ARMED GUARDS ON THEIR CARGO FLIGHTS AND, FAR MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, THE GOJ MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION WILL NOT GIVE PERMISSION FOR SHIPMENTS OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO COME INTO THE NARITA AIRPORT AT TOKYO DUE TO THE HIGHLY UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION AT THAT AIRPORT. NEITHER THE JAL NOR THE LUFTHANSA REGULAR CARGO FLIGHTS FROM GERMANY LAND AT ANY OTHER AIRPORTS IN JAPAN.

6. GOJ HAS CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF USING A CHARTER FLIGHT FROM FRANKFURT TO AN AIRPORT IN JAPAN OTHER THAN NARITA. BUT, ACCORDING TO HIRATA, BEFORE A CHARTER FLIGHT CAN LAND IN JAPAN, IT MUST HAVE APPROVAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION, WHICH MUST ASSURE THAT THE LOCAL POPULATION AROUND THE AIRPORT HAS BEEN CONSULTED AND HAS NO OBJECTION. SUCH APPROVAL FOR THE LANDING OF A CHARTER FLIGHT WITH 46 KG'S OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM AT OTHER CIVIL AIRPORTS IN JAPAN IS

UNLIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING.

7. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD HAVE BEEN TO BREAK THE 46 KG SHIPMENT INTO 10 INDIVIDUAL SHIPMENTS OF EACH LESS THAN 5 KG'S. THIS WOULD HAVE AVOIDED THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN ARMED GUARD, ACCORDING TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED REGULATIONS, BUT THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION DID NOT WANT EVEN THIS SMALL A QUANTITY OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM METAL BEING SHIPPED INTO NARITA AIRPORT.

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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INFO USDOEHQ WASHDC PRIORITY

USDOEHQ GERMANTOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

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8. FACED WITH THESE DEAD ENDS, THE JAPANESE HAVE NOW DECIDED TO FIND OUT IF THE UNITED STATES MIGHT HAVE SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM, AND THEY HAVE SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF RETURN OF THE MATERIAL FROM FRANKFURT TO THE UNITED STATES AND SHIPMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES VIA A U.S. MILITARY TRANSPORT TO THE YOKOTA AIRBASE IN JAPAN. IT WAS, EXPECTED THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES IN CONTROL OF THE BASE WOULD BE WILLING TO GRANT APPROVAL FOR RECEIPT OF THE MATERIAL. HIRATA INDICATED THAT JAERI WOULD PAY FOR THE COSTS OF SUCH TRANSPORTATION AND FURTHER ADDED THAT A SHIPMENT HAD BEEN HANDLED EARLIER INVOLVING JAPANESE PLUTONIUM WHICH HAD BEEN REPROCESSED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, WHICH WAS TRANSPORTED BY U.K. MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO JAPAN.

9. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY ALONG THESE LINES WOULD BE FOR A MILITARY FLIGHT DIRECTLY FROM FRANKFURT TO THE YOKOTA BASE. MISOFF INQUIRED RE THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHARTERED AIRCRAFT OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR LANDING AT
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THE YOKOTA AIRBASE AS STILL ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE, WHICH WOULD GET AROUND THE JURISDICTION OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION. HIRATA WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE AN ANSWER, BUT AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY TO CONSIDER.

10. ONE POSSIBILITY WHICH THEY APPARENTLY HAD NOT LOOKED INTO WAS A U.S. CARRIER CARGO FLIGHT (E.G. PAN AM) GOING FROM FRANKFURT TO THE U.S., TRANSITING THE U.S., AND ON TO TOKYO, BUT THE PROBLEM OF WHERE IN JAPAN THE FLIGHT WOULD TERMINATE WAS OPEN.

11. KURIHARA, HIRATA AND KATO HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION WITH FRG AMBASSADOR HOFFMAN IN VIENNA EARLIER IN THE WEEK TO SEE WHAT FRG REACTION MIGHT BE TO PROPOSAL MENTIONED PARA 8 ABOVE. AN INFORMAL RESPONSE FROM BONN INDICATED THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO RPT NO PROBLEM.

12. MISOFFS TOLD THE JAPANESE REPS THAT WE WOULD REPORT THE SITUATION TO WASHINGTON AND TRY TO GET A RESPONSE BACK TO THEM BEFORE THEY LEFT VIENNA ON AUGUST 11.

13. KURIHARA NOTED THAT THERE WERE STILL ROUGHLY 35 KG'S OF 90 PERCENT ENRICHED URANIUM LEFT OVER FROM THE ORIGINAL 81 KG'S AND THIS WAS IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE FORM OF UF6. THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO HAVE THAT MATERIAL CONVERTED TO METAL ALSO, AND IN ORDER TO AVOID THE PROBLEM OF SHIPMENT FROM GERMANY, THEY COULD POSSIBLY CANCEL THEIR CONTRACT WITH NUKEM FOR THE CONVERSION OF THIS MATERIAL AND INSTEAD HAVE IT CONVERTED IN THE UNITED STATES SO THAT IT COULD BE SHIPPED DIRECTLY FROM THE
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UNITED STATES TO AN ACCEPTABLE AIRPORT IN JAPAN.

14. ONE OTHER QUESTION AROSE IN THE DISCUSSIONS FOR WHICH NO ONE HAD AN ANSWER, NAMELY, WOULD A U.S. IMPORT/EXPORT LICENSE BE REQUIRED FOR MATERIAL TRANSITING

THE U.S.? WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT
AS WELL.

15. PLEASE ADVISE.
KIRK

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